BONAR LAW WANTS U. S. IN LEAGUE

PREMIER WOULD MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIP WITH ALLIES

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upon—I won't say to clear up a mess—but I'm suddenly called in to undertake a task, whatever the extent of my power, to undertake a task which it is said was undertaken by Augustus after the civil commotion in Rome, which was to tidy up the Roman empire.

This is not an easy task. In addition, a Government has been formed, I am the head of it, but the decision—everything has been taken out of the hands of the members of Parliament, who no longer exist—is referred to the people, and until they have given their vote how is it possible for me or any one else to know exactly where I am?

Among those who referred, and very naturally, to that remark of mine was the Prime Minister—the late Prime Minister. I wonder if he knows where he is? I notice that so far he has not issued an election address. I wonder what's the reason? At a time of civil commotion in this country there were people who were described as waiters upon Providence. Is it unfair to suggest that he is waiting on Providence as far as possible before putting his views in print?

Twits Lloyd George.

But there is something more under the first subject. After the change he spoke of the condition of the country in this way: "Here is a splendid going concern and its survivors have come to seize the profits." Three or four days afterward in Glasgow he painted a true picture of what the condition of the country is—of danger, anxiety and fear on every side. Both these pitcures cannot be true. Can a man who in three days expresses views so different, can he know where he is?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am going to give you another example of my simplicity. And there are many who will think it very foolish. I have made no attempt and intend to make no attempt to make any bargain with the press. You know and I know what the influence of the press is, and I am far from undervaluing it. I have special interest in Glasgow, for in one of the divisions of that large city I sit, and in Scotland I know that, unlike most parts of England, the coalition is more popular than it is with you.

Asks No Press Support.

There are two important newspapers in Scotland, and as it happens the editors of both of them have been my friends since I entered the Commons twenty-two years ago. I think I should have been justified if I had chosen to approach them, not to try to influence them for any unworthy motive, but perhaps to bring their personal friendship to my aid. I did nothing of the kind. I didn't because I knew they were both honest men who would put forward views which they believed to be in the best interests of the country. I wish every newspaper in the kingdom would take the same course, and so long as they expressed their honest opinion, however hostile they were, either to the Government or to myself, I should neither resent them nor retaliate.

Well, ladies, every one at every political meeting speaks of the great change which has taken place in the end of the coalition. I think I myself have said everything which I can say about it. But it is necessary, I suppose, to repeat it. Now, there are two things I wish to say at the outset.

Denies Unfairness.

There have been suggestions that what has been done by the Unionist party has been unfair to Lloyd George. There is absolutely no foundation for such a charge. I was responsible for the arrangement (the Coalition) made at the last election. I considered it a necessity then, but before doing it I had a meeting with my own party. It was an arrangement obviously intended for one Parliament and binding not a moment longer; but then it is suggested that because of a debt of gratitude which this country will never fail to pay, that we have no right to change our minds as to the best method of carrying on the government. Is he entitled for that reason—whatever our view is—to be Prime Minister for the rest of his life? The charge of unfairness is absurd.

There is something else in this connection I should like to say. The view put by those who think that breaking the coalition is criminal is that it was the only bulwark against labor. Well, I don't think so. I think, on the contrary, that if you could get what they talk about and desire—all men of good will on one side, and the Labor party, among whom there is good will also, on the other—that that was an ideal arrangement. But I'll tell you one effect of that ideal arrangement. It would be more than the Labor party could do for themselves in twenty years to make them an alternative government for this country. There is something else. When you talk about men of good will keeping up that kind of an arrangement as a permanency, isn't there something lacking? If the war had ended with Asquith as Prime Minister instead of Lloyd George, I believe the coalition would have been Asquith and his friends and us. That didn't happen.

All Worked Together.

We worked very cordially on both sides. Neither has the right to claim anything from the other. We worked very cordially with those now called the National Liberals, but when you are painting the kind of a picture I have given you, it is really rather difficult to think one could look forever upon men like Asquith, Grey and Crewe as typical Bolsheviki of our political life. You couldn't do that.

Another thing I should like to say is this: It has been suggested that the Unionist members of the late Government, the Cabinet members and the undersecretaries who went with Lloyd George, were noble men who sacrificed everything to duty. I think they were. I think they did as they ought to have done, precisely as they thought right. But what about the others? It is easy to be wise after the event—very—but the day before the Carlton meeting, if you had asked any man in the streets who was running the greater risk, those going with Lloyd George or those against, nine out of ten would have said that the greater risk was being run by those going against him.

Answers Balfour.

Now, let me say a little more about the breakup of the coalition. I see Mr. Balfour—I beg his pardon, but I shall never call him anything else—Lord Balfour, has been making a speech deploring the death of the coalition. He was my leader when I first entered the Commons. There is no one for whom I have greater respect, and with whom I am more unwilling to differ. (Applause). We have differed before, but very seldom, and when we do differ I consider very carefully whether or not I may not have been wrong. But differences there must be, and it would grieve me if I thought that possibly Balfour felt that in what I had done I had been moved by personal considerations. I don't think he will think that. We'll leave that out and consider his arguments of last night.

He points to the coalition as something beautiful, which has been wantonly destroyed. That is not a true picture. I wonder if any of you recall the story, which, when I read his speech, came to my mind? I have not a great recollection of it, for I hadn't time to look it up. I think it is one of Heine's.

Dead Perfection.

In this story a traveler came to a village and found the people in a tremendous state of excitement. He asked what it was all about. He was told by this man and the other: "It's because of the perfect woman." He couldn't understand what they meant, but by the exercise of great energy he succeeded in getting to the apartments where the perfect woman was. She was stretched upon a couch. He gazed at her with ever increasing admiration, feeling that everything he could have pictured to himself was there. She was a perfect woman, but, alas! she was dead. So was the coalition. Believe me, ladies, it wasn't I who killed it.

Now let me look at Lloyd George's picture of the same event. He described it as if there were a peaceful stream, with the boat floating calmly along, no breakers ahead, and suddenly an act of sabotage took place and it was destroyed. Then he paints himself in an unusual role. He is the angel of peace. He looks upon that destruction brought about by thoughtless—I forget the words—impulsive and indiscreet men. He says to himself, "It's done. What can I do as the angel of peace to prevent the evil growing greater?" It is an unfamiliar role, and I think that as he dressed himself for the party it was so unfamiliar that he made a little mistake. He told us as his first announcement that he was a free man with a sword in his hand.

The angel of peace often has knowledge. Nobody knew better than he of the troubled waters ahead, how they were swirling in every direction, and that a cataract was immediately in front. It was because he knew that, and for no other reason I can think of, that he decided to have an election before the meeting of our national union: not because he thought the cataract could be escaped, but because he thought it would be advantageous to go over after, not before, election. The cause was not intrigue. It was mutiny, so another of his supporters called it. It was the deep rooted feeling of constituencies. The real cause of this danger, the fundamental reason for it, is that people in this country everywhere felt that under his rule, "We don't know where we are to-day and cannot tell where we'll be to-morrow."

I am not going to elaborate upon it now. I saw in some newspaper that I was going to make a fighting speech. I don't intend to make a different speech from what I always do. In my early days as the leader of our party I had the reputation of being bitter. I don't know whether it was deserved, but perhaps age made me mellow—in any case I have worked with men like Asquith and Lloyd George and some labor leaders, and however pernicious I may think their policy, I know the men and am not going to say anything personally disrespectful to any of them. That's what I want to say at the beginning as regards the policy which I put before you and before the country.

Secretariat Changes.

The first thing I did upon assuming this office was to make a change in the Cabinet secretariat. It was not done, believe me, mainly on the grounds of enonomy, though I think there will be considerable economy in it. Everybody who has worked with me knows the value of the services of the Cabinet secretariat. When the Geddes committee overhauled the departments they carefully said that for the work they were called upon to do the secretariat was not too large, and they had no recommendation to make. It is not, therefore, on the grounds that it has been an extravagant and wasteful department that any change was made. I have made that change with the approval of my colleagues because I think that now the whole system ought to be altered if we are to get back to the old customs regarding the essential machinery of government. Let me point out what I mean.

I think our constitution a very good one. In the war, that great test of everything of this kind, it proved itself in my opinion far superior to any other constitution in the world. Now, let me illustrate what I mean by that:

Compares Constitutions.

Take what happened in connection with America. It so happened—I am blaming nobody, far from it—that the President of the United States carried out arrangements which, when the time came, he found the people of the United States would not support and a great deal depended upon the result. In our constitution that would not have happened. If there had been any doubts as to the people being behind the representative of the nation there would have been an election and we would have found out if anything was wrong or not. But there is something else in our constitution.

The Romans politically were a very wise people. They had a different system in peace and in war. In war they had a dictator. Our Constitution does not lend itself to dictatorship, but our Prime Minister is really in a tremendously strong position so long as he has the support of the Commons. He recommends the appointment of all Ministers. He can use tremendous personal power. During the war we set up a war Cabinet. You had to have some things centralized. That was right in war. But now that we are back to normal times let us do as the Romans did, let us get back to normal machinery. I will tell you what I mean by that.

The late Prime Minister is a man of not only tremendous energy, but of really surpassing vitality. Whenever any big question emerged, whatever it was, he undertook to deal with it. That is not my idea. My idea is that the man at the head of a big business should allow the work to be done by others, but give it his general supervision. That is my idea of the work of the Prime Minister.

It is now obvious that if the change is made effectively it depends not upon the Prime Minister chiefly, but upon his Cabinet, and if the Cabinet is incompetent the work is bound to be badly done. The charge is made on every hand that there is a perfectly incompetent Cabinet. I do not think so. Let me examine it.

One of the charges made by Lloyd George's chief lieutenant at the moment contained a sneer at the number of peers in the present Government. First of all, let us look at the facts. At the clase of Lloyd George's Government six of the chief offices of State were filled by peers. In the Government just formed there are seven, one more, that is all. Under two governments it was my duty to recommend Unionists for posts. And I say without the smallest hesitation that if it had been a question of merit alone, with no consideration of what house they sat in, we would have had a larger number of peers than was the case with either of those governments. I am not prepared to say that, seeing that the members of a Government must belong to one house or the other, you are to make it an absolute bar, whatever his ability, that a peer is not to occupy a place in the Government.

Defends His Ministers.

But there is another consideration worth while looking at. We have had two certain additions to that Government: the Earl of Derby and the Duke of Devonshire. We also have another who has been in the Cabinet before, and who will do good work. This is the Marquis of Salisbury. I refer to him especially because he does not come under the consideration put before you now. Within the last six months each of these two, in turn, was offered an office in Lloyd George's administration. They declined it. They must have been quite competent six months ago. Their deterioration since surely has been very rapid. But now we come to those of the lower house.

I was surprised at the phrase used by Lloyd George in referring to them. He said we had taken them from the kitchen. Well, where did we all come from politically? One can make, if you like, two distinctions. Let us call the kitchen those who were promoted and the cellar the members of the House who have held no office and came to ministerial office. What is the history of my experience in Parliament?

Cites Cellar Cabinet.

When Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government was formed, in 1905 that great Government came not from the kitchen but from the cellar, and of these, just to mention one or two names, was Lloyd George himself. Lord Haldane, or, as he then was, Sinclair, who, I think, became Secretary for Scotland, and the whole lot of them who afterward became such great men originally came from the cellar, and then gradually to the kitchen and to ministerial office. I think it is a great mistake to suppose that new men, young men, younger men (we are not all young men, I am sorry to say), that younger men won't do the work equally efficiently.

I wonder if you happened to read the delightful address by Barrie to the students of St. Andrew's? I read it with especial care, because he was elected to that office at the same time I was elected to a similar office in another university, and, though his point of view was not one that especially appealed to me, because the whole theme of it was that youth is kept too much in the background and that the old stagers should give way and let the younger men come in, there is part of it, I think, that is not to be despised. That is the advice:

"I do not want to dismiss all the old stagers right away. (Laughter.) Give us a little chance, but do look, not only with sympathy but with hope and confidence, on the young men who were chosen, because I believe they are able to fill these great offices." (Cheers.)

Now that reference to Sir James arrie suggested to me another idea,

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